

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom on Iraq
April 8, 2003

The future of Iraq belongs to the Iraqi people. After years of dictatorship, Iraq will soon be liberated. For the first time in decades, Iraqis will soon choose their own representative government.

Coalition military operations are progressing and will succeed. We will eliminate the threat posed by Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, deliver humanitarian aid, and secure the freedom of the Iraqi people. We will create an environment where Iraqis can determine their own fate democratically and peacefully.

We are grateful to our men and women in uniform, as well as to the brave troops of Australia and Poland, and to forces contributed by other members of the Coalition. They have demonstrated enormous bravery and professionalism in the face of great danger. We mourn for the members of the Armed Forces who have sacrificed their lives, and extend our deepest sympathies to their families.

We also grieve for the loss of civilian life in Iraq. Coalition forces take great care to avoid civilian casualties. The Iraqi regime has done the opposite. It has deliberately put Iraqi civilians in harm's way, and used women and children as human shields. It has sent execution squads to kill Iraqis who choose freedom over fighting for a brutal regime. We condemn Iraqi regime forces' attacks in civilian clothing, false surrender, and mistreatment of prisoners of war. These acts are an affront to all standards of human decency and international law.

We are taking every step possible to safeguard Muslim holy sites and other protected places in Iraq that are important to the religious and cultural heritage of Islam and of Iraq. We have no confidence that the Iraqi regime has done the same, and are deeply concerned by reports that it is deliberately endangering such sites and using them for military purposes.

The Coalition is delivering food, medicine, and other humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people. This flow will increase as more

of Iraq's territory is liberated and United Nations specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations are better able to operate. We welcome the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of Resolution 1472, which will allow shipments of humanitarian items to Iraq to resume under the Oil for Food program.

As we said at our March 16 meeting in the Azores, we will uphold our responsibility to help the people of Iraq build a nation that is whole, free and at peace with itself and its neighbors. We support the aspirations of all of Iraq's people for a united, representative government that upholds human rights and the rule of law as cornerstones of democracy. We reaffirm our commitment to protect Iraq's natural resources, as the patrimony of the people of Iraq, which should be used only for their benefit.

As the Coalition proceeds with the reconstruction of Iraq, it will work with its allies, other bilateral donors, and with the United Nations and other international institutions. The United Nations has a vital role to play in the reconstruction of Iraq. We welcome the efforts of U.N. agencies and non-governmental organizations in providing immediate assistance to the people of Iraq. As we stated in the Azores, we plan to seek the adoption of new United Nations Security Council resolutions that would affirm Iraq's territorial integrity, ensure rapid delivery of humanitarian relief, and endorse an appropriate post-conflict administration for Iraq. We welcome the appointment by the United Nations Secretary General of a Special Adviser for Iraq to work with the people of Iraq and coalition representatives.

The day when Iraqis govern themselves must come quickly. As early as possible, we support the formation of an Iraqi Interim Authority, a transitional administration, run by Iraqis, until a permanent government is established by the people of Iraq. The Interim Authority will be broad-based and fully representative, with members from all of Iraq's ethnic groups, regions and diaspora. The Interim Authority will be established first and foremost by the Iraqi people, with the help of the members of the Coalition, and working with the Secretary General of the United Nations. As coalition forces advance, civilian

Iraqi leaders will emerge who can be part of such an Interim Authority. The Interim Authority will progressively assume more of the functions of government. It will provide a means for Iraqis to participate in the economic and political reconstruction of their country from the outset.

Coalition forces will remain in Iraq as long as necessary to help the Iraqi people to build their own political institutions and reconstruct their country, but no longer. We look forward to welcoming a liberated Iraq to the international community of nations. We call upon our partners in the international community to join with us in ensuring a democratic and secure future for the Iraqi people.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland on Northern Ireland

April 8, 2003

We affirm our individual and collective commitment to the Good Friday Agreement and to its full and complete implementation. The people of Northern Ireland and their leaders have a momentous opportunity to ensure that peace is strengthened and political stability secured.

The opportunity to cement the peace is historic. The case is compelling; the cause just; the outcome must be fair, balanced, and comprehensive. The acceptance and implementation of the Governments' forthcoming proposals would promote the reconciliation that the people of Northern Ireland desire and deserve.

These proposals, built on the firm ground of the Good Friday Agreement, hold out the prospect of enormous progress. They reflect our shared view that there can be no place in Northern Ireland for paramilitary activity and capability. The break with paramilitarism in all its past forms must be complete and irrevocable. The proposals will encompass a wide range of additional issues, including normalization, the devolution of justice and

policing, sustainable political institutions, and human rights. The participation of all parties in effective community policing, a necessary key to long term stability in Northern Ireland, would constitute a significant step forward. There will be a need for a mechanism, one designed to safeguard the interests and rights of all, to verify compliance with the key undertakings. All three Governments are committed to supporting effective monitoring arrangements. Acts of completion, and a reaffirmation that political change is to come through exclusively peaceful and democratic means, will renew and expand trust and confidence.

Peace is its own dividend. At the same time, peace fosters an environment where entrepreneurship and business creativity can thrive, where jobs will be created, and where prosperity will follow. Our governments have agreed to work together to explore ways to encourage the flow of investment to Northern Ireland.

We call upon Northern Ireland's political representatives, community and business leaders, and citizens from all walks of life to respond positively to the forthcoming statements. We see no better way to fulfill the promise of the Good Friday Agreement. They have an unprecedented chance to continue their bold march from a troubled past to a future of promise and hope for generations to come. In seizing this opportunity, Northern Ireland will serve as a model to the world for dialogue and negotiation, demonstrating to all that what was once divided can be drawn together in a spirit of reconciliation and respect.

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Proclamation 7660—National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2003

April 8, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's former prisoners of war (POWs) are national heroes whose service to our